

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Miner, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Flexer, Vice Chair Gresko, Vice Chair Somers, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee

Dear Sen Duff and Rep Lavielle:

I am very much against SB 832 because it only looks at one side of the problem regarding human conflicts with wildlife. Although there should be humane solutions to conflicts, there should also be strong preventative measures to minimize conflicts in the first place. Any laws or regulations should include the removal/prevention of unauthorized feeding which accustoms wildlife to humans (i.e., garbage, outdoor pet food, some bird feeders). (Canada has been particularly successful with this approach re: polar bears).

This bill also does not seem to address the issue of feral or community cats appropriately in that those who care for community cats provide the best possible alternatives to extermination of these cats either in their community or in shelters. The emphasis instead should be on spay/neuter and humane programs to support these cats during their lifetimes. Volunteers currently provide for many of these cats with their own time and money. Additionally all bills should contain clear language for the general public rather than the Latin names identifying, among others, domestic cats and dogs.

The primary resource in managing human and wildlife conflicts is public education. Providing seminar-type forums, written handouts and knowledgeable personnel to advise residents, especially in conflict situations, would help considerably. Although conflict can occur with any kind of wildlife, coyotes and bears are prominent now. DEEP could be a significant resource in advising the public on how to prevent or handle conflicts. I recently attended a seminar in Westport run by HSUS on coyote conflicts from which I learned a number of techniques to reduce potential conflict with my two dogs. I wish others had this opportunity too.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Linda A Giers
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